

Montana DEQ Forest Fire Smoke Advisory

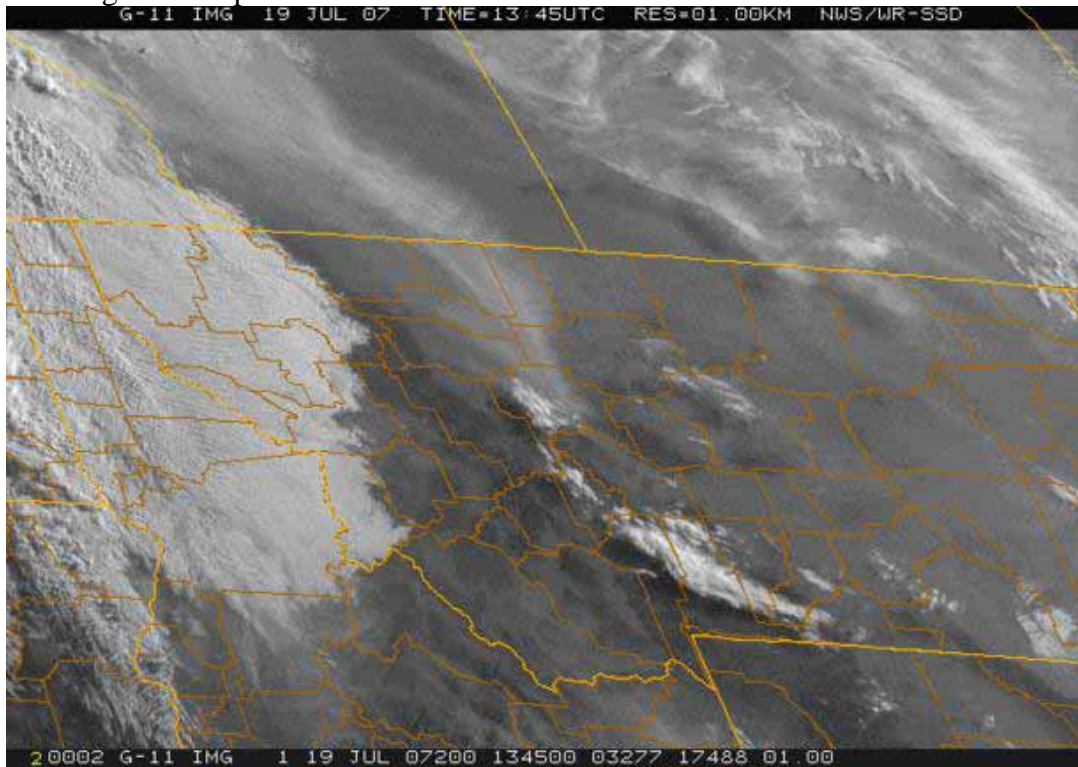
July 19 2007

10:00 AM Thursday

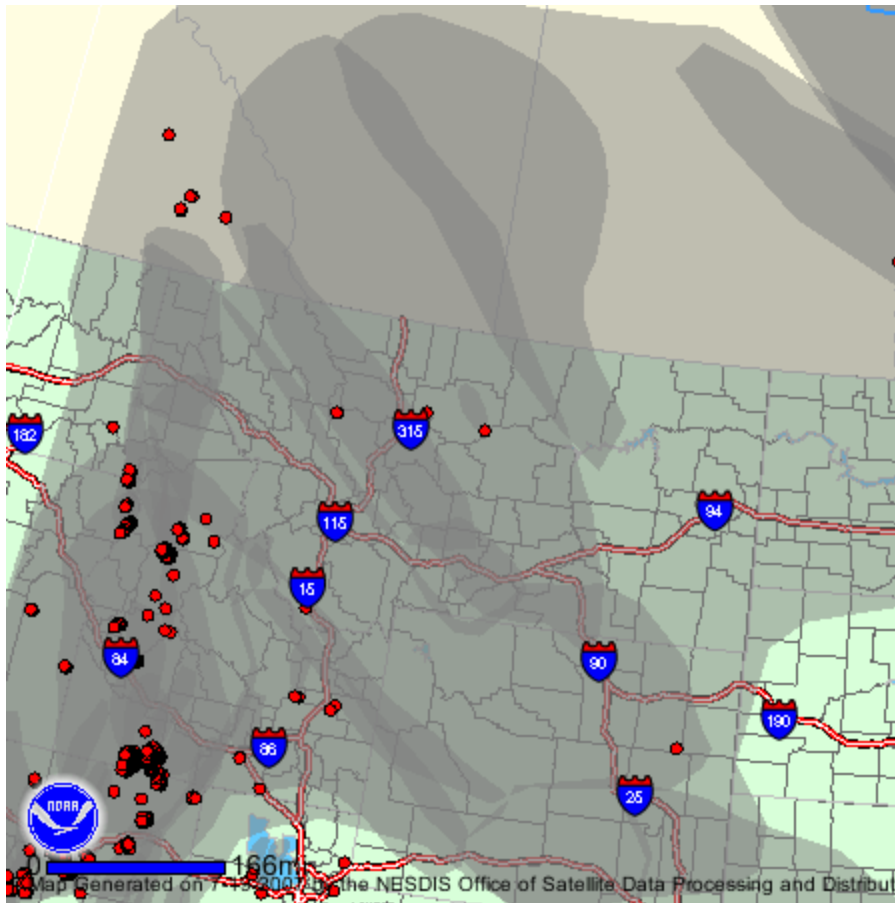
Current Situation

Smoke aloft continues to stream into the western half of Montana this morning from the south. There is also a noticeable band of smoke across north central Montana that is pushing north into Canada. This has produced a lot of haze but with the exception of MODERATE condition in Butte, surface impacts have not been a problem so far. Some impacts are expected later today as a hot dry air mass pushes into the state from the southwest. See the forecast below for details. Smoke conditions near the active fires in Montana are expected to be UNHEALTHY or worse. Residents near active fires or experiencing noticeable smoke levels should use the VISIBILITY GUIDELINES to determine smoke levels in their area and guide their activity decisions.

Morning satellite photo centered on Great Falls:



This morning's analysis from NOAA's satellite services division shows the active fires in Montana and the smoke plumes combining and spreading downwind(the analyzed smoke is based on yesterday's satellite coverage, the fire detects are based on last nights satellite coverage)



Red indicates hot spot detected. Grey represents smoke seen by satellite. Fire size is exaggerated for visibility at this scale

To identify individual fires on graphic above go here:

http://activefiremaps.fs.fed.us/lg_fire2.php

Real time particulate information is currently available in most of the larger urban areas from several different sources including: DEQ run PM-10 BAMS and PM2.5 BAMS, NWS ASOS visibility monitors, and USFS remote access Nephelometers and BAMS.

This morning's smoke report is below, comparing particulate levels where we have information to MDEQ's Forest Fire health advisory levels.

<http://www.deq.state.mt.us/FireUpdates/SmokeCategories.asp>

Updated 10 AM July 19, 2007

Locations and severity of forest fire smoke reports since midnight of the date above at reporting stations.

<u>HAZARDOUS</u>	
VERY UNHEALTHY	
UNHEALTHY	
UNHEALTHY FOR SENSITIVE GROUPS	
MODERATE	Butte T8

T1(x) One-hour TEOM or BAM value (number of values)
 T8(x) Eight-hour average TEOM or BAM value(number of values)
 T24 24 hour average TEOM or BAM value
 Vis(x) Visibility value(number of hours)
 Vis(am/pm) Visibility value from twice/day reporting stations
 (est) estimate

Local impacts in areas immediately adjacent to active fires are expected to exceed some or all of the advisory levels. DEQ recommends the use of local visibility guidelines

<http://www.deq.state.mt.us/FireUpdates/VisibilityRanges.asp>

to evaluate possible health risks and make informed activity decisions.

Forecast

Hot and dry air will continue to push into the state from the southwest for the next couple of days. This will keep the state downwind of many of the fires in southern Idaho, Nevada and Utah. It is also likely to increase local impacts from the fires in the state as the low humidity and winds may cause some fires to increase dramatically. Red Flag warnings for hot, dry, and windy conditions have been posted for parts of southwest Montana today. Smoke from the Pattengail Creek fire northeast of Wisdom could impact the Anaconda-Butte-Helena area later this afternoon and evening if the fire there takes off this afternoon. Smoke from the fires in the Bob Marshall Wilderness could impact communities along the Front Range from Choteau to Browning. Dispersion this afternoon should be excellent with high mixing heights and moderate to strong winds. This may mix some of the smoke aloft down for some temporary impacts under the thickest part of the plume. Areas downwind of active fires could see significant impacts if fire levels increase dramatically. With the excellent mixing the plumes will mix down to the surface miles downwind of the fires. Residents near active fires need to remain aware of current conditions and use the visibility guidelines:

<http://www.deq.state.mt.us/FireUpdates/VisibilityRanges.asp>

to guide their activity decisions as the situation changes.

John Coefield
Meteorologist
Montana Department of Environmental Quality

Jcoefield@mt.gov